

## LANDOWNER ACTIONS AND CAUTIONS

Protecting your property from flooding, debris flows and soil erosion and preventing water quality degradation are important landowner responsibilities that can be particularly challenging following wildfire.

- Retaining some burned vegetation is typically advised and natural regrowth may be sufficient protection, but each site is unique. Assistance from certified, qualified personnel is recommended to select the best approach for your property.
- Hydrophobic (water-repellant) soil can be created or worsened by fires. It should not be broken up or tilled without consulting appropriate experts.
- Customized efforts may be required in complex or steep topography, along streams, or with numerous dead, standing trees.

Ensure your drainage features (i.e., gutters, catch basins, storm inlets, culverts, or swales) are functional and clear of debris (leaves, sticks, etc.) prior to the rainy season.

Communicate and coordinate with your neighbors, since rainfall, runoff, erosion and geologic hazards don't stop at property lines!

Post-fire wattles that remain on your property may need to be removed or replaced to ensure erosion and sediment control functions. However, their filling can be spread as mulch; they can also be handled as ordinary waste.

Toxic-laden BMPs are not expected to remain on any parcels cleared under either the public or private debris removal programs.

**If you suspect that BMPs remaining on your property are contaminated** with fire-related residuals, please contact [info@sonomacountyrecovers.org](mailto:info@sonomacountyrecovers.org) or call (707) 565-1222.

Remember to obtain and comply with appropriate permits for any earthwork/grading, retaining walls, or disturbance along or in stream channels.

## TECHNICAL AND PLANNING RESOURCES

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)

U.C. Cooperative Extension (UCCE)

U.C. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCDANR)

Sonoma Resource Conservation District (RCD)

Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (RCD)

Permit Sonoma

Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

## RELATED QUALIFIED SERVICE PROVIDER TYPES

Certified Professional in Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (CPSESC)

Licensed Landscaping Contractor

Licensed Landscape Architect  
Civil Engineer (P.E.)

Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG)

Professional Geologist (PG) or Certified Professional Geologist (CPG)

Registered Professional Forester (RPF)

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)  
Certified Arborist

Licensed Timber Operator (LTO)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[sonomacountyrecovers.org/rain-ready](https://sonomacountyrecovers.org/rain-ready)

If you observe an erosion, drainage, or water quality issue **call 911 for a health or safety emergency**; or call (707) 565-1222 for non-emergencies.

You may also submit non-emergency issues via a web browser or mobile app to 'SoCo Report It'.



# MAKING SURE YOUR PARCEL IS READY FOR WINTER

## Post-Fire Erosion and Sediment Control for Landowners



# WHAT ARE BMPS AND WHY ARE THEY NEEDED?

Living vegetation and healthy soils limit erosion and sedimentation hazards under most conditions, but natural and human-caused disturbances reduce this benefit.

- Elevated flood, landslide, and/or mudflow hazards typically occur for a few years post-fires due to injured vegetation and soil damage.
- Hazards vary in magnitude with weather conditions and differences in local topography, geology, and burn severity.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) protect disturbed areas from erosion and decrease the possibility that sediment or other pollutants end up in water bodies.

Properly installed and maintained BMPs reduce the force of raindrop impact, slow down and spread out storm water, and give water a chance to sink into the ground rather than runoff into streams.

Under law, landowners must prevent pollutants, including sediment, from entering storm drains, creeks, rivers, lakes or wetlands.

- Landowners may be held responsible if uncontrolled runoff from their properties contributes to off-site soil erosion, flooding, or slope failures.
- Landowner responsibility exists whether parcels are occupied, vacant, or under construction for rebuilding.



## THE FIRE-RESPONSE BMP STORY

Containment BMPs (aka 'wattles') were placed to capture ash and debris around building pads, damaged structures, parcel margins, at storm drain inlets and along some vulnerable streams immediately following the October 2017 fires. Debris-removal contractors were required to dispose of these potentially contaminated BMPs (along with accumulated material).

Sediment control BMPs include replacement BMPs installed by contractors after debris removal, BMP repairs made during or following soil testing, and BMPs installed by public agencies and profit groups to address possible runoff and erosion problems over the winter of 2018.



## BMP MATERIALS

### SURFACE PROTECTIONS

- Mulch (relatively thin, less than 2 in, uniform cover)
  - Sterile or weed-free straw
  - Chips
  - Slash
- Secured erosion blankets or fabrics
- Hydro-applied mulch

### FLOW BARRIERS / FILTERS

- Wattles
- Logs
- Gravel bags

### BASINS AND TRAPS (for water and/or sediment)

### WHERE TO GET MATERIALS?

- Agricultural and Irrigation Suppliers
- Contractor Suppliers
- Farm and Garden Stores
- Feed Stores
- Forestry Suppliers
- Hardware Stores
- Landscaping and Sand/Gravel Yards

## WHAT'S A WATTLE?

Wattles and other types of 'fiber rolls' are sediment control BMPs that can also play a role in soil stabilization and/or flow control. Wattles are:

- Sausage-shaped tubes generally filled with straw, mulch, or compost.
- Small enough to fit an individual storm drain inlet, or may extend hundreds of feet
- Wrapped in material ranging from 'photo-decay' netting to more bio-degradable fabrics
- Usually temporary, even if replaced or repaired during the time they are needed.

Wattles need to be installed properly following technical guidelines.

*"The word wattle has origins related to the old high German term for bandage"*

